

The Norman Conquest

77

which after long confusion the general
Alexius
Comnenus ascended, a man of
considerable
character who was able to found a
dynasty that
lasted a century. The marriage scheme
was of
course upset, but Alexius treated
Helena with
every consideration. This, however,
was not
enough to appease Godfrey; he
received and
maintained a refugee called Michael
V, probably
an imperialist, and collected an armada
with the
open intention of restoring him.
In May, 1081, the Duke of Apulia left
Otranto
with 1300 knights and 15,000 men-at-
arms* es-
corted by the counts of Bari, Salerno, and
Aversa;
Roger Borsa, his eldest son by
Sigelgaita, was left
behind to hold Apulia, Guiscard had
with him
his wife, her sons (Henry and Robert, and
Bohemund,
*Heir of the Norman Angevins, it
picturesque figure,
the image of his father in ruggedness of
feature!
In 1081 they captured the
island-fortress
of Corfu and besieged Durazzo, "the key
of the
Empire to the west,"¹¹ A Venetian fleet
inter-
posed to save Venice, for the city of
the lagoons
was bound over to the Empire by
commerce
and the treaty had already begun to
"police

the Adriatic," On the land wtle. the
Byzantine
burned down (tutacard'ti wooden cats,
riiiiir., and towers by meann of the Greek
fiit». Finally Alexius hintnelf led
forward against
the bcwtcgtrii 70,000 men, of whom part
were the
Chmrd, The Nornnuw timsterecl only
men, but they prtmptly gave battle,